

Symbolism of the maṇḍala palace of Cakrasaṃvara according to Tāranātha

The multicoloured lotus of the chief deities – even though acting in various ways in cyclic existence, free of the faults of cyclic existence.

The inner floor of sapphire – the basic absolute awareness.

The palace is multicoloured – the many ways of acting for the benefit of beings.

The palace is square, symmetrical – the equality/equal validity of all phenomena.

The palace has four corners – the four pure attitudes; love, compassion, joy and equanimity.

Four doorways – the four liberations.

The next groups describe the thirty-seven factors oriented towards enlightenment (*byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos sum cu rtsa bdun*, bodhipakṣa dharma)

Each toran is supported by four pillars – the four disciplines (*yang dag pa'i spong ba bzhi*, samyakprahṇa):

- To develop those virtuous qualities that have not arisen
- To properly protect those virtuous qualities that have arisen
- To abandon all non-virtuous qualities that have arisen
- To avoid developing non-virtuous qualities that have not arisen

The palace has four plinths – the four objects of close attention: (*dran pa nyer gzhas zhi*, smṛtyupasthāna):

- The body
- Sensations
- Phenomena
- The mind

The four porches – the four bases of transformation (*rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi*, ṛddhipāda):

- Aspiration
- Effort
- Analysis
- The mind

All decorations, flowers and so forth – the seven components of the path of enlightenment (*byang chub kyi lam yan lag bdun*, bodhiyaṅga):

- Concentration
- Effort
- Joy
- Thorough training
- Discernment of phenomena
- Attention
- Equanimity

Foundations of the five-fold walls (the five walls are either imagined as standing parallel, one inside the other, or on top of each other) – the five abilities (*dbang po lnga*, indriya)

Confidence
Effort
Attention
Concentration
Understanding

That these walls are built up high – the five powers (*stobs lnga*, bala):

Confidence
Effort
Attention
Concentration
Understanding

Eight pillars (supporting the roof of the palace) – the noble eight-fold path (*'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad*, ārya'ṣṭāṅga mārga):

Right view
Right attitude
Right speech
Right pursuit
Right livelihood
Right effort
Right attention
Right concentration

This completes the list of 37.

The palace has four toran – the four methods of disciplining

The crossed-vajra ground – the destruction of the view of an eternal self.

The eight charnel grounds – the eight examples of illusory nature, or the purity of the eight consciousnesses

Vajra-garland – turning of the dharma-wheel of the Vajrayāna.

Perimeter of light – light of awareness blazing everywhere and driving far away all evil.

Other aspects of the symbolism of the palace and the protective sphere are as normal and not given here. Of those given here the thirty-seven factors oriented towards enlightenment are the minimum – the others should be applied as suitable.

Adapted from "bde mchog nag po zhabs lugs kyi sgrub thabs rnam par bshad pa rgyas 'brel thun mong ma yin pa lhan cig skyes pa'i gzi 'od phyogs beur rgyas pa", by, Tāranātha. Translated by Edward Henning.